

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00

COA-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-04 INR-07 IO-10

NSF-02 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-03 RSC-01 OES-05 SS-15 SP-02

INT-05 /089 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/CAN:LFJANOWSKI:MGH

APPROVED BY EUR/CAN:EMBROWN

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R 072116Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

INFO AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS STATE 028728

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: POPLAR RIVER POWER PLANT

SUBJECT: SENV, CA

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NOTE THAT WILL BE GIVEN TO CANA-
DIAN EMBASSY ON FEBRUARY 10.

QUOTE THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WISHES TO INFORM THE EMBASSY
OF CANADA OF THE CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
THAT THE PROPOSED POPLAR RIVER POWER PROJECT OF THE
SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION AND ITS ASSOCIATED COAL
MINING COULD RESULT IN TRANSBOUNDARY AIR AND WATER POLLU-
TION, DAMAGE TO US FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND THE POPLAR
RIVER'S AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM, ADVERSE CHANGES IN THE WATER
TEMPERATURE OF THE RIVER, AND PRECLUDE DEVELOPMENTS ON
THE US REACH OF THAT RIVER. IN ADDITION, THE UNITED
STATES GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT CONSUMPTION OF WATER
BY THIS PROJECT MAY EXCEED AN EQUITABLE APPORTIONMENT OF
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THE WATERS OF THE POPLAR RIVER TO THE DETRIMENT OF USES

IN THE UNITED STATES. THESE CONCERNS ARE BASED ON A PRE-LIMINARY EVALUATION BY US OFFICIALS OF THE STUDY OUTLINE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT ASSESSMENTS, POPLAR RIVER PROJECT BOARD ON INQUIRY, AND OUTLINE OF PROPOSED PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES-POPLAR RIVER GENERATING STATION PREPARED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION.

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THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WISHES TO CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF THE EMBASSY OF CANADA THAT THE PROJECT TIME SCHEDULE IN THE STUDY OUTLINE INDICATES THAT CONSTRUCTION OF A DAM AND PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE POWER PLANT AND MINING OPERATION HAVE BEGUN PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT'S EFFECTS ON THE UNITED STATES. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT FEDERAL AND LOCAL OFFICIALS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS MEET IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE TO EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT FOR THE UNITED STATES. THE MEETING COULD PROVIDE A USEFUL FORUM FOR AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT, ALLOW US TECHNICIANS TO INDICATE AND FURTHER EXPLORE AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES AND HELP ASSURE THAT THE PROJECT WILL BE IN CONSONANCE WITH MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. UNQUOTE.

2. FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MATERIAL MAY BE USEFUL IN EXPLAINING US CONCERN:

AIR QUALITY - US ESTIMATES OF PARTICULATE AND SULFUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS INDICATE THAT POPLAR RIVER GENERATING PLANT WILL GREATLY EXCEED US STANDARDS. US STANDARD FOR PARTICULATE IS .10 LBS PER 10,000,000 BTU. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT POPLAR EMISSIONS WILL BE .90 LBS. LIKEWISE, US STANDARD FOR SULFUR DIOXIDE IS 1.20 LBS PER 10,000,000 BTU, WHILE OUR ESTIMATE OF PROJECT IS 1.97 LBS.

WATER QUALITY - WATER QUALITY OF POPLAR IS VERY GOOD DURING HIGH SPRING RUNOFF. THESE RUNOFFS ARE SUITABLE FOR STORAGE FOR IRRIGATION AND OTHER USES. POPLAR RIVER PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO DEGRADE WATERS TO PRESENT POOR UNCLASSIFIED

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QUALITY FOUND ONLY IN LOW RUNOFF PERIODS.

FISHERIES - PROJECT COULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE OR ELIMINATE WALLEYE SPORT FISHERY ON BOTH EAST AND MAIN POPLAR RIVERS.

WATER RIGHTS - MEAN AVERAGE ANNUAL FLOW POPLAR IS APPROXIMATELY 11,000 ACRE FEET. HIGHEST FLOW ON RECORD IS 34,000 ACRE FEET; LOWEST 2,000 ACRE FEET. FIRST 300

MEGAWATT UNIT WILL REQUIRE 5,000 ACRE FEET OF WATER OR ABOUT 45 PERCENT OF AVERAGE ANNUAL FLOW. ADDITION OF SECOND 300 MEGAWATT UNIT WOULD INCREASE REQUIREMENT TO 7,000 ACRE FEET OR 63 PERCENT OF AVERAGE FLOW. CURRENT PLANS FOR CONTROL OF RESERVOIR INDICATE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DOWNSTREAM RELEASES OF WATER FROM THE PROJECT EXCEPT FOR SPILLAGE WHEN RESERVOIR REACHES CAPACITY. CANADIAN STUDIES INDICATE THAT UNLESS SUPPLEMENTARY STREAM FLOW IS ADDED TO POPLAR, THE RIVER BELOW THE DAM WOULD BE DRY ONE THIRD TO ONE HALF OF THE TIME DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF GENERATING UNITS CONSTRUCTED. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WATER POLLUTION, ELECTRIC POWER PLANTS, POPLAR RIVER
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE028728
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LFJANOWSKI:MGH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750047-0190
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750261/aaaaccux.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2003 by MarshK0>; APPROVED <22 JAN 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENV, CA
TAGS: SENV, CA, US
To: OTTAWA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006